

FRENCH PRESS ARTICLE

On 17 October 1979, Le Dinh, a Vietnamese refugee in France published an article in the Le Matin Newspaper concerning Cuban forces in Vietnam, Soviet missile launcher bases and 33 American PWs in Hanoi. Numerous attempts were made by the American Embassy, the USDAO, and French officials to contact refugee Le Dinh. Refugee finally was contacted and agreed to be interviewed by the DIA Debriefing Team on 22 November 1979.

The team's debrief of Le Dinh began as scheduled on 22 November. The team conducted 21 hours of formal debriefing and approximately nine hours of casual conversations during dinner engagements. Le Dinh was very cooperative and is willing to participate in follow-up interviews.

Le Dinh explained that he had deliberately fabricated much of the information that he provided to the French journalist. For example, he had never been an officer in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. The details which he presented to the debriefing team leaves little doubt that he possesses some authentic information about US PWs. Le Dinh was an analyst in the Combined Research Office of the Research Department (C-14) in the Political General Department for the Ministry of National Defense, of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. As described by Le Dinh, the Political General Department performs a role roughly equivalent to the US Defense Intelligence Agency. Le Dinh's office exercised administrative control and coordination over several sections, including those responsible for the administration and exploitation of US PW's. In his capacity as an analyst, Le Dinh had access to policy documents and hearsay information concerning US PWs in Vietnam between 1970 and early 1975.

Le Dinh demonstrated intimate knowledge of events concerning several known US PWs, including Captain John McCain, USN, prior to Operation Homecoming. However, he volunteered very little new information concerning these persons or SRV policy for exploiting US PWs prior to March 1973.

Le Dinh claimed to have personally observed on two occasions in 1974, a group of 33 US military who had chosen to remain in Vietnam after the close of hostilities. This group is quartered in a housing area on the western edge of Hanoi City. Le Dinh claims to have seen documents confirming that these 33 persons are undergoing extensive training preparing them to conduct activities in support of the Communist Party of the US following their clandestine return to the US. Le Dinh claimed to have heard rumors in his department, shortly after the Peoples Republic of China seized the Paracel Islands (1974), that the entire population of a camp containing US PWs and about 60 guards located somewhere near the northern border with China had disappeared without a trace (NFI). He also claimed that on several occasions he heard General-grade officers state that the SRV continued to hold a "strategic weapon" of about 700 US PWs.

It is difficult to make a conclusive judgment concerning Le Dinh's statements regarding US PWs in Vietnam after March 1973. The hearsay information is subject to many variables. He was able to give partial descriptions of only three US PWs in the group of 33 whom he observed personally: (1) a USMC Captain who defected at Khe Sanh in 1968; (2) one Black and one Mexican USMC NCO artillerymen who were captured at Khe Sanh in 1968. Unfortunately, much of the descriptive data was based on hearsay information. Efforts will be made to correlate those descriptions with unaccounted-for USMC personnel.

Le Dinh's account of his position in the Ministry of Defense appears to be authentic. That position could have provided access to the type of information he has described. DIA's analysis continues.

Le Dinh

Le Matin, a French newspaper, printed an article in its 17 October 1979 issue reporting an interview with Le Dinh, a Vietnamese refugee, who had personal access to 33 American prisoners as of 1975. These men were considered "progressive" and sympathetic to the communist cause. Some of these individuals were reportedly successful in having members of their family join them. Le Dinh also observed six Caucasians in 1975 who were working at the Danang radar station. He was told that these Caucasians were Americans who were captured in South Vietnam in 1969. Le Dinh also provided hearsay information that approximately 700 American prisoners were not released in 1973 and remain in Vietnam.

Le Dinh demonstrated that he had access to information about the North Vietnamese agency responsible for U.S. PW matters. He has demonstrated accurate knowledge of U.S. PW/MIAs prior to 1973. Le Dinh may possess additional information about unaccounted-for Americans in Vietnam, however he is presently not forthcoming on this subject. Le Dinh has not furnished sufficient descriptive data on the 33 American "progressive" prisoners and the six Caucasian "collaborators" to identify these individuals. Le Dinh is an active, ongoing source. He indicated a desire to maintain a dialog with our analysts. A DIA report is being accomplished on Le Dinh and will be provided upon completion.

PW/MIA AUGMENTATION TEAM REVIEW

DATE: 31 MAR 86

NAME/CASE NUMBER(S):

FOLDER REVIEW

---Establish logical order

OK

---Clarify non-self evident notes

7

---Check with analyst regarding any missing data

7

--Follow-up required

yes

no

Additional collection required:

HUMINT SIGINT IMINT POLYGRAPH

Additional production required:

Analysis Production Computer Support

---Concur with conclusions

yes

no

COMMENTS:

TEAM MEMBER:

NAME

SUBSEQUENT PW/MIA OFFICE ACTION:

DATE: _____

Contact with sources

YES

NO

N/A

Polygraph

Collection tasked (HUMINT SIGINT IMINT)

Production/Analysis completed

No action taken